2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

787 821 that it would rain if the crows bathed in the river, if the sun set or rose behind a cloud or was surrounded by a circle, or if the oxen dug the earth with their horns in the springtime. When the moon was surrounded by a dark circle, the weather would supposedly change to rain if it was summer and to snow if winter. Rain would also follow if the stars shone brightly, the sky was red in the morning, or the middle part of Vitosha was foggy. But the surest sign of bad weather was the sight of pigs carrying straw to the sty at sunset. Yet good weather alone did not ensure good crops. The human element was of utmost importance.

● 464 241 Bulgaria had, according to prewar figures, the largest labor supply per decare in Europe, with 5.8 workers available for 100 decares (25 acres) of land. Italy came next with 4.7, then Poland with 4.3, but Great Britain had only 0.7. In spite of such a surplus of labor the people had not begun to cultivate intensively. An increasing number of young people therefore had to seek a living from sources off the farm. Such intensive cultivation, however, would require radical changes in farming practices. Not more than thirty Dragalevtsy families saved liquid fertilizer, although the rest did haul wagonload after wagonload of manure from the stables to the fields late in the winter to be dumped in piles awaiting later spreading. There was very little harrowing, and what was done took place in the spring after the rains.

243 The cornfields were plowed under at once after the harvest and were immediately sown with grain. If the field had produced *smes*, the stubble was plowed under to lie fallow for one or two years. The fallow fields were plowed once in the spring, once in the middle of the summer, and again in the autumn just before the grain was to be sown.

What might be considered a Bulgarian counterpart of our Thanksgiving feast occurred at the time of this fall sowing of grain. Early in the morning the woman arose quietly to bake one large and two small loaves of bread, and to catch a young rooster which she handed over to her husband just before he was ready to start to the field in the oxcart. What followed was the observance of a pagan fertility rite. With the dignity of a priest performing an ancient sacrifice, the

2:Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EE1 Bulgaria EE1

462

In the Field

Caring for animals in the pasture: the children.
Plowing: the father or oldest son.
Sowing: the father or oldest son.
Hoeing the corn: unmarried daughter or housewife.
Harvesting the grain: the whole family.
Threshing the grain: the whole family.
Saving the seed for next year: no one in particular.

At the Market

Selling butter, eggs, poultry, vegetables: the housewife.
Selling sheep, pigs, and other animals: the men.
Buying the necessities from Sofia: the men.
Buying necessities in the village: the women and children.
Keeping the cash box: the father; in rare cases, the mother.

857
883

It can be seen that children as well as the adults shared in this specialization of labor. The chief occupation of those below sixteen was the care of the animals. During the pasturing season these children spent more time in the fields than in the village. Because their pastures joined they were able to get together for group games and still keep a watchful eye upon their animals. The work they were called upon to do was not dangerous, but it was time consuming. Many famous men who grew up in the villages looked back upon this pastoral experience as a childhood heaven-on-earth. Some of the old men, recalling the days when the large joint families *(zadrugi)* still existed, told of being sent with the animals up the mountains a long way from the village. For a month they were absent, seeing no one but a few strangers who happened to pass by. But those distant pastures were no longer available to the peasants, so they kept their animals (and children) close to the village.

● 464

Whether this seems exploitation or not is a matter of definition, but custom did decree that there should be no idle hands in the village economy, even to the extent of keeping small children occupied. To be sure, the attitude toward labor was changing, but the love of the land persisted, and owning land meant working that land, at least in

2; Sanders E-5 (no date) 1949 EEl Bulgaria EEl

Dragalevtsy. In general, though the division of labor was traditional, the specialization of occupation was increasing. Though unemployment was absent from the village, this in no way implied that all had the kind of work they wanted. It was astounding enough that even in times of world depression all did have a way of earning a living.

In Bulgaria, as in most countries, property passed from parent to child. There too the laws governing this transfer were very complicated. However, as a general principle in the villages sons inherited twice as much land as daughters. Usually the sons received equal amounts, but a father while still alive could divide the land, taking an equal share for himself, which he later gave to his favorite son. Quite often a sister said when the time of division arrived: "Why should I take land away from my brothers?" and forfeited her claim. In some cases she would sell her share of the estate cheaply to a favorite brother. If she was married, however, her husband could insist that she take what was her due and might even go to court to pursue the case. Every year there were a few Dragalevtsy people involved in long-drawn-out lawsuits originating over the division of inherited land. More often than not, lawyers' fees used up a great part of the value of the property.

A heavy inheritance tax accompanied any such transfer of property from the father to his children. One man at work in the hayfield took time off to tell me of the arrangement being worked out in his family:

"Our father, who is still living, told us three brothers to divide his property equally among us. We have not made the division officially as yet, because if we did we would have to pay an inheritance tax amounting to about four hundred dollars. We divide the land by lot. We take strips of land, both meadows and fields of equal value, and draw lots for the strips. Of course, our father has kept some of the land for himself, but we shall divide that among the three of us after his death."

The most serious conflicts in the village arose when there was disagreement over the division of a patrimony. Brother turned against brother, and whole families became involved in the dispute. There

829
466

crime against the state and put within the proscription of Communist criminal law. Any transgression on the part of a worker is, therefore, a direct offense against the state authority. It is easily understandable why Communist criminal law has engulfed the great part of matters which usually pertain to labor legislation, and why even the latter is punitive rather than protective in character.

The basic legal documents related to labor law and relations in Communist Bulgaria are the constitution,[7] the Code of Labor[8] and the Statute of the Trade Unions.[9] They, of course, are supplemented by various acts which, according to the Communist doctrine of "normative acts,"[10] can and do supersede previous legislation, no matter what governmental body originated them.

641
461

According to the constitution, labor, besides being "a right," is "a duty and a point of honor for every able-bodied citizen. It is the duty of every citizen to engage in socially useful labor and to work according to his powers and ability."[11] Of course, it is the government which enforces the observance of this constitutional norm and establishes the "social utility" of the work done. In practice, "the duty to work" is exemplified in the complete regimentation of Bulgaria's labor force.

● 464

Two governmental agencies, the Office of Labor Cadres and the Main Board of Labor Reserves, are especially entrusted with the registration, distribution, recruitment and complete control of all available manpower from 14 years of age upward. Their basic tasks are, in Communist language, "to register the available labor force by finding and keeping at hand, through registration, all employed and unemployed workers; to find them appropriate jobs and, with respect to the fulfillment of the Five-Year Economic Plan, to meet the needs of the industrial, constructional, and other enterprises by guaranteeing to them the necessary manpower . . . . Workers who leave their jobs arbitrarily and without excusable

[7] *Izvestiya na Prezidiuma na Narodnoto Sobranje*, Year II, No. 91, November 13, 1951, in Bulgarian.

[8] *Ustav na Profesionalnite Suyuzi v Narodna Republika Bulgaria* (Statute of the Trade Unions in the People's Republic Bulgaria), approved by the Third Congress of the Bulgarian trade unions, December, 1951 (Sofia: *Profizdat*, 1952), in Bulgarian.

[9] In Communist jurisprudence, any act of a central governmental authority prevails upon preceding legislation, without distinction of formal superiority. The "doctrine of normative acts" is summarized in United States Department of Labor bulletin cited at footnote 1, pp. 5 and 6.

[10] Art. 73.

●464 reasons, and thereby affect the labor discipline and the fulfillment of the production plans of the enterprises, have to be reported to the Office of Labor Mobilization . . . ."[1] The Board of Labor Reserves, in particular, obtains manpower "in two ways: through organized drafting of manpower from villages and towns—these persons will go directly into production—and through the preparation of skilled labor cadres in the schools for labor reserves."[2]

466 681 It should be clear that the Communist authorities not only decide a youth's profession for good but they also deprive any Bulgarian worker of even an elementary freedom of choice and movement. A Bulgarian citizen must either submit to the governmental labor agencies or be "mobilized" for work by the Office of Labor Mobilization. Further disobedience leads to confinement to "labor-educational work," that is, forced labor camps, under the Law on the People's Militia[3] or to punishments under the Penal Code. The desire for complete control over the labor force is further evidenced by the elimination of any unemployment insurance from Bulgaria's social legislation.

466 [671] But the full captivity of the Bulgarian worker appears even clearer when one considers some of the provisions of the Labor Code as well as some supplementary legislation. Thus, Article 26 of the code officially sanctioned the right of the government to transfer workers and employees "to a different work in the same or another enterprise or in another locality, even without their consent, on order by the respective minister." And Article 2 of the Law for Establishing Stability of the Labor Force in the Enterprises and Offices[4] explicitly prohibited "the arbitrary quitting of the job," under threat of heavy penalties in Article 4, such as imprisonment for up to four months or corrective labor for up to one year, if no greater offense of the Penal Code is envisaged. These acts violate a basic human

[1] Newspaper *Izgrev*, March 8, 1951 (Bulgarian).

[2] *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Worker's Deed), organ of the Bulgarian Communist Party, May 14, 1952 (Bulgarian). The Board was created by Ordinance No. 199 of the Council of Ministers, in *Izvestiya na Prezidiuma na Narodnoto Sobranje*, Year III, No. 45, April 25, 1952.

[3] *Durzhaven Vestnik*, No. 69, March 25, 1948 (Bulgarian). For details on Bulgarian forced labor legislation and practice, cf. Roger N. Baldwin, ed., *A New Slavery* (New York: Oceana Publications, 1953), chapter on Bulgaria based on author's research. See also United Nations, *Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Forced Labour* (Geneva: E/2431, 1953).